Atty. Dkt. No.: 02CR146/KE

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

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- 1. A communications system, comprising:
- a plurality of transceiver nodes configured to utilize a time division
- multiple access structure to communicate between the transceiver nodes, each
- 4 transceiver node generating congestion metric information based on the
- 5 utilization of a link to each of its neighbors; and
- the time division multiple access structure including a plurality of
- time slots during which the transceiver nodes are configured to communicate
- 8 data cells, the data cells being transmitted from a transmission queue, the data
- 9 cells including routing information and the congestion metric information.
 - 2. The communication system of claim 1, wherein the congestion metric information is generated by a channel access subsystem.
- 3. The communication system of claim 1, wherein the congestion metric information is based on cell counts transmitted in unicast and broadcast allocated slots.
 - 4. The communication system of claim 3, wherein the cell counts are compared against the total capacity of each link.
- 5. The communication system of claim 1, wherein the congestion metric information is based on the fullness of priority queues.
- 6. The communication system of claim 1, wherein the congestion metric information is based on the availability of digital signal processor (dsp) buffers.
 - 7. The communication system of claim 1, wherein the congestion metric information is based on the availability of unallocated slots.

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8. A method of propagating congestion information in a transmission 1 system, the transmission system comprising transceiver nodes, comprising: 2 measuring by a node, the utilization of each of the links to each of 3 its neighbors; generating congestion metric information based on the link 5 utilization; 6 combining the congestion metric information with routing 7 information; 8

information.

9. The method of claim 8, wherein the congestion metric information is

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transmitting the congestion metric information and routing

- 1 10. The communication system of claim 9, wherein the predetermined number of states is four (4).
- 1 11. The communication system of claim 8, wherein a route management subsystem disseminates the congestion metric information.

provided as one of a predetermined number of states.

- 1 12. The communication system of claim 8, wherein a flow control subsystem of a second node may utilize the congestion metric information when received by the second node.
- 1 13. The communication system of claim 8, wherein the congestion 2 metric information and routing information is transmitted by a route management 3 subsystem.
- 1 14. The communication system of claim 8, wherein the congestion metric information is generated by a channel access subsystem.

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- 1 15. The communication system of claim 8, wherein the transmission system is a time division multiple access (TDMA) system.
- 1 16. A radio transceiver propagating congestion information in a radio 2 network system, the radio network system comprising radio transceiver nodes, 3 comprising:
- a means for measuring by a node, the utilization of each of the links to each of its neighbors;
- a means for generating congestion metric information based on the link utilization;
- a means for combining the congestion metric information with routing information;

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- a means for transmitting the congestion metric information and routing information.
- 1 17. The radio transceiver of claim 16, wherein the congestion metric information is provided as one of a predetermined number of states.
- 1 18. The communication system of claim 17, wherein the predetermined number of states is four (4).
- 19. The communication system of claim 16, wherein a route management subsystem disseminates the congestion metric information.
- 1 20. The communication system of claim 16, wherein a flow control 2 subsystem of a second node may utilize the congestion metric information when 3 received by the second node.
- 21. The communication system of claim 16, wherein the congestion metric information is generated by a channel access subsystem.

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1 22. The communication system of claim 16, wherein the radio network

system is a time division multiple access (TDMA) system.